



Minutes
City Council's Neighborhood Quality of Life, Public
Safety, & Parks and Recreation Committee
May 8, 2007

Minutes of the City Council's Neighborhood Quality of Life, Public Safety, & Parks and Recreation Committee held on Tuesday, May 8, 2007, 3:30 p.m., at the Tempe City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Member Present:

Councilmember Ben Arredondo, Chair
Councilmember Onnie Shekerjian

City Staff Present:

Debbie Bair, Sr. Mgmt. Asst.
Cindy Brown, Accessibility Spec.
Tom Canasi, Comm Svcs Mgr.
Carlos de Leon, Deputy Pub Wrks Mgr.
Jim Gaintner, Asst. Fire Chief
Shelley Hearn, Comm Rel Mgr
Jan Hort, City Clerk
Rosa Inchausti, Diversity Mgr
Cliff Jones, Fire Chief
Jayson Matthews, TCC Mgmt Asst
John Osgood, Deputy Pub Wrks Mgr
Sheri Partridge, Council Aide
Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec Mgr
Tom Ryff, Police Chief
Chris Salomone, Comm Dev Mgr
Scott Smith, PD
Judy Tapscott, Deputy Comm Svcs. Mgr.
Sheri Wakefield-Saenz, Dep. Comm. Dev. Mgr
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Svcs Dir

Guests Present:

Joe Pospicil, NAC member
Stephanie Salazar, ASU
Darryl Jacobson-Barnes, citizen

Councilmember Ben Arredondo called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – ADA Task Force Report

Rosa Inchausti summarized that Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that each municipality complete a self-evaluation of the accessibility of its programs and services to the public. A task force was assembled of representatives from all City departments to review every program and service in the City.

Cindy Brown summarized that the task force received input from all departments. In general, Tempe is really accessible. Problems involved the “how to do it” rather than “will we do it.” Some specific findings:

- Fire Department:
 - Emergency evacuation policies did not specifically include disability procedures. Larry Randall is updating these policies with target dates for review.
- Parks and Recreation:
 - Eligibility criteria inadvertently excluded people with disabilities, and criteria was immediately revised.
- Police Department:
 - There was no TTY in the jail. Although this is not required, the Department of Justice has asked for this. This has been resolved.
- General:
 - Two websites were created. The intranet site is available to City employees with an outline of the requirements and a “how-to” list. The internet site alerts the public to accessibility and how to request accommodations, and promotes the accessibility of the City.

Ms. Brown added that Tempe parks are more accessible than any other city.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that he hopes Ms. Brown will continue to work with Mark Richwine as the new parks are being developed.

Agenda Item 2 – Ad Hoc Rental Housing Task Force Update

Shauna Warner summarized that the task force met from September 2005 to January 2006 to examine the effects of rentals on single family neighborhoods. Nine recommendations were generated. Council had directed the task force to reconvene to check the progress of the recommendations. The task force will meet on Tuesday, May 22, from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m., in the Council Chambers. Additional items may be added to this committee’s action plans as a result of the Task Force meeting.

Agenda Item 3 – Update on Neighborhood Shopping Centers Rehabilitation Programs

Sheri Wakefield-Saenz summarized that the City has had an active retail recruitment and retention program for the last ten years. About seven months ago, Chris Salomone saw the need to refill the Retail Specialist position vacancy that has existed over the last year and a half. That position was converted to a Technology Specialist and Susan Franchuk was added to the work group. She has a detailed work plan which includes attending trade shows throughout the country.

Ms. Wakefield-Saenz highlighted the current retail status:

- Tempe has approximately 9M sq. ft. of retail space, with a vacancy rate of less than 3 percent. About six years ago, there was a serious issue with big box vacancies. Through work with the retail, brokerage and development communities, much rehabilitation work has been done.
- 500,000 sq. ft. of additional retail is going into the IKEA center, with two more phases of that project to come.
- Smaller retailers are filling the Priest corridor between Warner and Elliot.

- About 80% of the retail is actually service-related and “goods” are actually not sold. That is a national trend and most sale of soft goods has moved to the power centers. It is a challenge for the neighborhood centers to find actual sale of goods. To offset that, the Upwardly Urban event was held to attract small retailers into the community.
- Tempe has moderated relative to the other Valley communities. It is harder to attract the high-end retailers, but we are doing well in getting our share of the retail numbers.

Councilmember Arredondo added that as long as Walmart doesn't extend any of their outdoor walls, they have met all the criteria.

Ms. Wakefield-Saenz added that the Mervyns currently occupying that space has been proactive with staff to secure a new location.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that over the last ten years, staff has done well because many vacant areas are now flourishing. He hopes work will continue on the center at Mill and Southern.

Agenda Item 4 – Review of Jaywalking/Wrong Way Bicycle Riding Policy

Police Chief Tom Ryff introduced Sgt. Scott Smith who replaces Fran Santos and will assist him in providing internal and external customer service from his office.

Sgt. Scott Smith added that he is moving from Criminal Investigations and he looks forward to being a liaison between Council and the Office of the Chief.

Councilmember Shekerjian commended Fran Santos for her outstanding effort and she looks forward to the opportunity to work with Sgt. Smith.

Assistant Chief Angel Carbajal summarized that a question was raised about the enforcement action for jaywalking and bicycle violations. All civil traffic citations are at the officers' discretion. Jaywalking involves crossing the street mid-block between two controlled intersections. Many circumstances enter into such a citation, i.e. a near-accident or a driver being forced to take evasive action.

Councilmember Arredondo directed Assistant Chief Carbajal to work with Stephanie Salazar from ASU to get the word out that the City will be involved in active enforcement.

Assistant Chief Carbajal continued that the same is true with bicycle violations. Riding against the flow of traffic on a sidewalk is the leading cause of car/bicycle accidents in Tempe and the majority of the accidents occur within two miles of ASU. In the past, an education campaign was conducted during the first week of the semester. Whether a vehicle is turning right at an intersection or coming out of a driveway to turn right onto the roadway, the natural inclination is to look to the left for approaching traffic and the driver wouldn't be looking for a bicycle approaching from the right.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked if pedestrian traffic is governed by local ordinances rather than State law.

Assistant Chief Carbajal responded that both local and state law is involved.

Chief Ryff explained that the term “jaywalking” is not really on the books. Two statutes govern. The state specifies that a pedestrian cannot step out into the roadway and interfere with traffic; the City specifies that a pedestrian must cross at a traffic light and that crossing between traffic lights is a violation.

Agenda Item 5 – Update on Police Presence at High Schools

Assistant Chief Carbajal summarized that officers are located at all the public high schools and junior highs and the working relationships developed with school staff have been very beneficial. A few weeks ago there was an issue at Corona del Sol and the School Resource Officer was the point person in coordinating police efforts.

Councilmember Arredondo added that it is very important to note that the Corona del Sol situation was handled very well. It is important to note in the record that we do have a presence at every junior high and high school.

Agenda Item 6 – Review Seized Asset Community Action (SACA) Grants

Jayson Matthews, on behalf of the TCC, thanked Chief Ryff, Assistant Chief Carbajal, and the entire Police Department for their support of the Seized Asset Community Action (SACA) Grant Program. This program has been in existence since 1995 and has been a great partnership between the Police Department and the Tempe Community Council. These funds are generated from a percentage of all the drug busts through the RICO statute. He presented a list of recommended recipients, which include youth programs focusing on gangs, alcohol, drugs, dropouts, juvenile crime prevention and character-building programs. The target population is middle school youth, specifically for summer programs. The 2006 SACA grants supported programs that provided positive activities to over 11,000 kids in 10 different programs.

Agenda Item 7 – Police Department Update on Party Patrol, Selective Enforcement Motorcycle Squad and Exceptional Incidents

Assistant Chief Carbajal summarized that the Selective Enforcement Motorcycle Squad (SEMS) responds to neighborhood traffic complaints. From February through April 2007, the squad logged 263 hours and issued 228 violations. Between August 18, 2006, and March 31, 2007, the Party Patrol responded to 924 loud party calls, issued 381 response notices, 114 parking citations, 34 crime-free multi-housing cards, 45 field cards, and made 22 arrests. He added that the Party Patrol is staffed on Friday and Saturdays nights, above and beyond regular staffing.

Assistant Chief Carbajal is in charge of Field Operations, composed of patrol and traffic divisions, and the patrol area is focused on basic services and crime trends. Each commander is assigned a specific quadrant and each will be responsible for reporting crime issues and response. Some of the international students in the Terrace and Rural area have been concerned about the service they have been receiving. He is working with the Crime Prevention Unit to ensure they are communicating with Ms. Salazar and her office at ASU and they are considering another training session focusing on how to be alert to danger and how not to be a victim. He is also working on a partnership with ASU Police beginning with bike officer teams for patrolling areas south of Apache and east of Rural Road in the Terrace area on Wednesdays and Thursdays, as well as Mill Avenue on Friday and Saturday nights.

Councilmember Arredondo directed Assistant Chief Carbajal to submit a memo for the Friday Packet with bullet points on how the Police Department is interacting with ASU Police.

Chief Ryff explained that the quadrant system will re-deploy the command and a commander will be responsible for each section of the City and held accountable to report on crime trends.

Councilmember Arredondo suggested that Chief Ryff make a presentation to Council in July or August to highlight the changes in operations.

Chief Ryff added that since the department is in the final stages of a complete reorganization with an update to be presented to the City Manager within the next sixty days, the Council presentation could be made before school starts.

Agenda Item 8 – Community Emergency Preparedness for Disasters Update

Fire Chief Cliff Jones summarized that the Fire Department is responsible for emergency management activities in the City, and the Department receives strong support from the Council and all City departments. In emergency management, it's not so much what a city does during or after a disaster, but the true measure of how effectively that disaster will be handled is what they do before the disaster. He summarized several current initiatives to strengthen Tempe's Community Disaster Preparedness profile.

- The Emergency Management Plan is under revision and will come to Council in the next month or so.
- New emergency management software has been purchased for the City Emergency Operations Center to assist with tracking and management of major emergencies.
- A large scale disaster exercise (Topoff 4) is being planned for October and the first planning meeting will be held this week.
- Citizen Emergency Response Teams
- Terrorism response capability
- Storm Ready City designation was granted and will allow earlier severe weather notifications

Agenda Item 9 – Review of Special Incident Support Trucks for Technical Rescue and Weapons of Mass Destruction

Chief Jones announced that two new specialty vehicles will be available on the southwest side of City Hall for viewing after the meeting. One vehicle will support efforts in technical rescue and the other will support response to weapons of mass destruction or terrorism.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that he would suggest to Council to have the Fire Department return in September or October and highlight the preparations being made.

Councilmember Shekerjian added that this planning is to prevent predictable surprise.

Agenda Item 10 – Neighborhood Parks Master Plan Design Update

Mark Richwine presented a suggested process for the neighborhood park renovation and restoration program. This process is similar to that used in previous park master planning

projects. There are essentially eight steps from onset to the development of construction documents. Staff has emphasized heavy citizen and neighborhood participation to ensure a neighborhood park with the amenities identified by the neighborhood. This process would be used to go forward for the balance of the program.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that the process has served the City well and he encouraged staff to continue.

Agenda Item 11 – Maryanne Corder Neighborhood Grant Program Park Funding Update

Shauna Warner summarized that Council sets aside \$225K from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget each year for the Neighborhood Grant Program. These grants are a community-wide benefit and do not benefit individual homeowners. Many of the neighborhood associations view their parks as a gathering space and the funds are many times used for their parks. She provided a list of all the park projects funded through the grant program. She noted that much of the ADA access was done through the grant funding as well.

Councilmember Arredondo asked Shelley Hearn for the amount of human services requests that were not funded.

Shelley Hearn responded that approximately \$140K is unfunded.

Councilmember Arredondo stated that a fellow councilmember has had some requests for neighborhood parks and he asked what could be done to make a substantial difference.

Ms. Warner responded that a lot is being done through the bonds. The Neighborhood Grant Program is limited to \$12K per association and is intended for small neighborhood projects. The larger projects are done through the CIP process.

Councilmember Arredondo responded that Council is committed to getting the non-profits back up to their prior level.

Ms. Warner added that grant applications for park improvements change each year. Applications are due May 14th so staff won't know what the requests will be until after that time.

Councilmember Shekerjian asked why some of the parks on the list have only a short history but some parks have long histories.

Ms. Warner responded that it is up to the association to ask every year and it's up to them to choose what types of projects. Many of the associations do signage or landscape, so there are different types of projects.

Agenda Item 12 – North Tempe Multi-generational Center Update

Tom Canasi summarized that the 30,000 sq. ft. facility opened to the public in mid-July of 2006, with the official dedication following in September. The facility has been an outstanding demonstration of community collaboration with partnerships that provide direct services to a full range of citizens. Staff is working with Rio Salado to provide additional services and other partners are interested in providing service. There are 600 participants on a daily basis.

Councilmember Arredondo added that he has received questions about whether the public is allowed to use the gyms and the weight facilities at the North Side Center and at the Escalante Center.

Mr. Canasi responded that there are limited adult evening activities. The Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA have reserved programming. It is difficult to have open gym on a regular basis, but some open gym activities have been carved out.

Councilmember Arredondo asked that the times for public use be posted. The concern has been raised that the public is paying for the facility and we have an obligation to make sure that our own residents can use the gym.

Agenda Item 13 – Future Agenda Items

Councilmember Arredondo asked Ms. Warner for the status of the work plan.

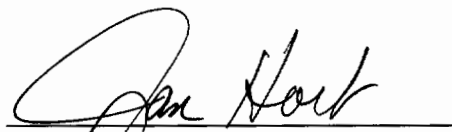
Ms. Warner responded that all items relevant to this fiscal year have been covered and the remainder can wait for further Council direction in the Fall.

The next Committee meeting will be on September 11, 2007.

Councilmember Arredondo asked that a DVD, if available, of the Marketplace be shown at the September meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Shauna Warner


Jan Hort
City Clerk